

La guerra russo-ucraina e gli storici

a cura di *Andrea Borelli**, *Stefano Bottoni***, *Marco Bresciani****

The Russian-Ukrainian War and Historians

The discussion aims to discuss the role of history and historians in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Scholars of Russian/Ukrainian/Soviet history have come to grips with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine since February 2022 and its impact on their research in a broader sense. In the light of the current conflict, they offer new insights into Russia's long-term imperial projects and their territorial implications nation-building in independent Ukraine and Ukrainian nationalism, and on the "Ukrainian question" and its links with other "questions".

Key words: Russian-Ukrainian war, historians, nation-building, Empire

Parole chiave: guerra russo-ucraina, storici, nation-building, Impero

Scatenato il 24 febbraio 2022, l'attacco russo su larga scala all'Ucraina ha scosso l'ordine internazionale, ha mobilitato (e non di rado diviso) le opinioni pubbliche e le forze politiche, e non da ultimo ha chiamato direttamente in causa gli storici.

È stato per primo Vladimir Putin, nel suo discorso televisivo pre-invasione, a ricorrere al passato per giustificare la propria azione militare attraverso la negazione dell'esistenza storica dell'Ucraina. Si è trattato di un messaggio in continuità con un tratto caratteristico delle pratiche di potere putiniane: la spregiudicata riscrittura della storia e il suo utilizzo strumentale allo scopo di ottenere legittimazione politica interna e internazionale.

Sono stati quindi gli storici a intervenire non solo per smentire la versione del Cremlino in merito ai rapporti russo-ucraini di lungo periodo, ma soprattutto per misurare la cesura più o meno netta segnata dalla guerra rispetto

* Dipartimento di Civiltà e forme del sapere, via Trieste 40, 56126 Pisa; andrea.borelli@unipi.it

** Dipartimento Sagas, via San Gallo 10, 50129 Firenze; stefano.bottoni@unifi.it

*** DSPS, via delle Pandette 32, 50127 Firenze; marco.bresciani@unifi.it

all'ordine internazionale post- 1989-91, le sue radici nella vicenda sovietica e post-sovietica, le sue ripercussioni regionali, europee e globali. Se e in quale misura sia mutato il modo in cui gli storici si accostano non soltanto alla recente storia russa e ucraina, ma anche alla storia imperiale zarista e sovietica, è il nucleo centrale di questa discussione.

Categorie precedentemente trascurate o criticamente discusse quali “impero”, “colonialismo”, “genocidio” riguardo all'esperienza storica russo-sovietica sono prepotentemente entrate nel dibattito pubblico. Del resto, la ricerca storica non può ormai prescindere dagli echi e dagli effetti della guerra di Putin, già iniziata nel 2014 dopo la rivoluzione del Majdan con l'occupazione della Crimea e la formazione delle repubbliche filorusse nel Donbas. Basti pensare all'irrigidimento culturale a cui il regime putiniano ha costretto la Russia negli ultimi dieci anni. In conseguenza di ciò, la produzione scientifica russa si è gradualmente allontanata da quella occidentale, con cui invece fin dagli anni '90 aveva costruito solidi rapporti di collaborazione e condivisione scientifica. Con sempre maggiori difficoltà, inoltre, gli studiosi di tutto il mondo hanno avuto accesso agli archivi della Federazione russa per lo studio della storia contemporanea dello spazio russo e sovietico fra l'800 e i giorni nostri. Con massima liberalità (i paesi baltici e la Moldavia) o in modo più cauto e selettivo (Caucaso e Asia centrale), gli archivi e le biblioteche dei paesi dell'ex Unione Sovietica hanno preso il posto di quelli della Russia di Putin, alla luce delle difficoltà nel reperire materiale documentario nel centro dello spazio imperiale russo. Tutto ciò ha avuto un impatto sugli orientamenti della ricerca storica.

Tanto per fare un esempio, nei convegni annuali della Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (la principale società internazionale dedicata allo studio transdisciplinare dell'area) fino al 2021 erano gli studiosi occidentali o russi dediti a temi legati alla storia russa a dominare la scena; successivamente all'attacco russo del 2022 si sta invece assistendo a uno spettacolare cambiamento nell'approccio metodologico e anche semantico alle vicende dello spazio euro-asiatico attraverso un rinnovato interesse per le sue aree “periferiche”.

Tuttavia, le narrazioni della storia contemporanea schiacciate sulla cronaca del presente corrono il rischio di annullare la complessità intellettuale sotto il peso degli eventi bellici che scandiscono quotidianamente il flusso dell'informazione. La storia e il lavoro degli storici devono dunque offrire una varietà di prospettive analitiche e di strumenti critici, capaci di guidare al di là di opache equiparazioni tra le parti in conflitto e di ambigui discorsi tesi a legittimare la guerra imperiale di Mosca che mira a disarticolare lo Stato ucraino e a “reincorporarlo” nello spazio geopolitico russo.

Abbiamo quindi chiesto a quattro specialisti della storia sovietica, ucraina ed europea di spiegare se e in quale modo la guerra di Putin abbia cambiato il loro approccio professionale ai propri temi di ricerca. Quindi, a ciascuno

di loro abbiamo chiesto di offrire spunti di riflessione sul proprio campo di specializzazione che consentano di illuminare aspetti direttamente o indirettamente legati al conflitto in corso.

Paul Werth, specialista di storia imperiale russa, pone l'accento sull'incerto futuro degli studi di russistica nel mondo accademico internazionale per quanto concerne l'accesso alle fonti primarie e i contatti personali con gli studiosi dell'area, anche se afferma di non avere modificato radicalmente il proprio orientamento di ricerca già improntato nello scorso decennio a una storia imperiale fortemente «decentrata» e attenta alle voci delle periferie non russe. Al di là della legittima denuncia politica dell'aggressione del 2022, l'analisi storica dei progetti e delle pratiche del potere imperiale russo sul lunghissimo periodo consente di restituire la guerra di Putin a una sinuosa dinamica di espansione e contrazione «territoriale», i cui esiti finali sono tuttora incerti.

Olena Palko si interroga a proposito delle leggi sulla memoria nazionale varate in Ucraina in seguito alla Rivoluzione della Dignità del 2014 e sul nesso tra de-sovietizzazione/de-comunistizzazione/de-russificazione nel discorso storico e memoriale ucraino dell'ultimo decennio. L'aggressione del 2022 ha radicalizzato infatti la risposta che la politica ucraina, senza ormai particolari differenziazioni ideologiche, offre attraverso una narrazione dei rapporti storici russo-ucraini schiacciate sulla categoria del post-coloniale. Come ricorda Palko, il rischio è che le pratiche memoriali del dopoguerra possano consolidare una prospettiva rigidamente etnonazionale, basata su complessi vittimistici e su una percezione acritica del passato come movimento teleologico rivolto alla piena (ri)conquista della sovranità ucraina.

Seguendo una traiettoria analoga, John-Paul Himka, autore di molti importanti studi sul nazionalismo ucraino e sul ruolo delle sue formazioni più radicali nel corso della seconda guerra mondiale, sostiene che la guerra non abbia mutato o cancellato le ragioni della sua ricerca storica, anzi per molti versi le ha rafforzate. Le sue opere hanno infatti chiarito la collaborazione dei gruppi nazionalisti ucraini con le forze d'occupazione naziste, il loro contributo allo sterminio degli ebrei, e le loro convergenze ideologiche con la costellazione delle forze fasciste. Secondo Himka, il riconoscimento pubblico di queste vicende storiche e delle loro eredità sotterranee e durature in età sovietica e post-sovietica porta ad una decostruzione dei miti nazionali ucraini che è diventata tanto più necessaria nel contesto della mobilitazione nazionalista di guerra.

L'ultima a intervenire è Holly Case, autrice nel 2018 di un volume sull'*età delle questioni* nel quale la volontà russa di riconquistare lo spazio storico e geopolitico ucraino veniva colta nell'ansia di Putin e dei suoi ideologi di trovare una «soluzione definitiva» all'annosa «questione ucraina», che aveva ossessionato per tutta l'età contemporanea le classi dirigenti. Soprattutto, a suo dire, la «questione ucraina» si è trasformata, come mai finora, in un affare di portata globale; eppure, alla dimensione «nazionale» dello scontro fra Mosca

e Kyiv non si è unita una riflessione sulla stretta relazione tra la «questione ucraina» e le tante altre «questioni» all'ordine del giorno (dalla «questione» dei migranti a quella dell'energia, da quella cinese a quella europea). Una disconnessione intellettuale preoccupante perché ci priva della capacità di inquadrare criticamente fenomeni complessi del mondo di oggi e di rintracciarne le dinamiche di lungo periodo.

Paul W. Werth*

Ukraine and Russia, History and Territory

Any consideration of the Russian war against Ukraine must begin with the observation that it is hard to say anything original. The first stage of the war, beginning in 2014, saw a flurry of new books and much commentary, including a forum in the journal «Kritika» that I, as an editor back then, helped to organize¹. The conflict's more recent stage, initiated in February 2022, has accelerated the process, providing many new insights from scholars whose expertise ranges widely across historical time². From these people and others we have heard about Russia's persistent imperial consciousness, and its imperial conception of the Russian nation that denies independent existence to Ukraine and Ukrainians³. We have also seen the Putin regime's abuse of historical truth, whether in speeches or in Russia's new history textbooks⁴. To repeat such observations here strikes me as unnecessary, so I propose addressing other issues.

* History Department, University of Nevada, 4505 S. Maryland Pkwy, Las Vegas, NV 89154; werthp@unlv.nevada.edu

¹ The forum appeared in «Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History», 16 (2015), n. 1, pp. 119-56, with contributions by Faith Hillis, John-Paul Himka, William Jay Risch, Alexei Miller, and Georgiy Kasianov. It has earned some criticism, with claims (to take one example) that its articles «gallingly shift the blame from Russia to Ukraine», among other alleged transgressions. Cfr. A. Zayarnyuk, *Historians as Enablers? Historiography, Imperialism, and the Legitimation of Russian Aggression*, «East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies», 9 (2022), n. 2, pp. 191-212 (cit. p. 192). I regard this critique as neither measured nor accurate.

² We thus have a new edition of A. Kappeler, *Ungleiche Brüder: Russen und Ukrainer vom Mittelalter bis Gegenwart*, C.H. Beck, München 2023, as well as new books by M.S. Wessel, *Der Fluch des Imperiums: Die Ukraine, Polen und der Irrweg in der russischen Geschichte*, C.H. Beck, München 2023 and S. Plokhly, *The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York 2023. This is only a small sampling of relevant books and says nothing about the outpouring in other forms, such as this very forum.

³ The central primary text is Putin's infamous "article" of 21 July 2021: *Ob istoricheskoy edinstve russkikh i ukrainstsev*, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181> (last visit to all the links 15 October 2023).

⁴ Cfr. i.e. O. Krasnoluts'ka, *Feikovy raspad SSSR: Kak Rossiia perepisala istoriiu*, «Korrespondent», 8 August 2023, and *Zaglianut' v proshloe, chtoby poniat' proiskhodishchee za oknom*, «Rodina», 7 August 2023.

The first concerns the future study of Russia's history. How has the war affected those who have been studying that history for years or decades? Possibly, future students will discern a rupture in the scholarship in the 2020s akin to the one that occurred in the 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR. While the earlier shift brought heightened attention to the ethnic diversity and imperial character of both tsarist Russia and the USSR (though it would be wrong to say that people were unaware of such things before then), then the later one has produced insistent calls for the «decolonization» and «decentering» of Russian history – though with what sometimes strikes me as a weird disregard for what scholars have actually been doing for many years now. What will come of this remains to be seen, though I suspect that it will entail a perplexing combination of astute insight and vacuous grandstanding.

The war has certainly altered access to source materials in Russia for many scholars outside that country, which will likely shift the focus of research in certain ways. A degree of “decentering”, for example, may occur of its own accord. Yet digitization has for some time now provided all scholars with access to extensive source material wherever they are. And while archives in Russia are inaccessible to many foreign scholars (though not to all, and not to those Russians who remain in the country), repositories in other post-Soviet states remain open, as do relevant collections elsewhere⁵. People were already using much of this material before the war, so it is unclear how large of a shift will follow. Thanks to Zoom, even our contact with colleagues in Russia itself is far from entirely blocked – although whether scholars abroad desire such contacts is a different matter. The larger point is that while the war clearly has consequences for scholarship (above all in Ukraine itself), at least some of what we are likely to see in the future will represent the continuation and intensification of trends already in train. The shift may prove to be more rhetorical than substantive.

As for myself – a historian of the Russian Empire more familiar with the country's eastern and southern regions than its west – I cannot state that the war has fundamentally altered my approach to the study of Russia's history. The imperial dimension of that history has long stood at the center of my work, which seeks to understand the experience of what we may conditionally call ethnic and religious minorities⁶. I see myself situated in a longer-term evolution of our field: it began as a Russo-centric enterprise, to which

⁵ Consider as an example the Research Center for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa) in Bremen, with an enviable collection on dissent, emigration, and repression in Eastern Europe after 1945-53 and political transformation after 1989-91.

⁶ I say «conditionally» because I contend that «minority» is a category more relevant to nation-states than to multi-national empires. I address the matter in *What is a “Minority” in an Imperial Formation? Thoughts on the Russian Empire*, «Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East», 41 (2021), n. 3, pp. 325-31.

the small number of researchers studying non-Russian peoples and regions remained peripheral; a subsequent stage after the Soviet collapse brought greater scrutiny to those peoples and regions, increasingly on the basis of familiarity with non-Russian languages; and among our present tasks is bringing these two trajectories together, so that developments previously recounted as a narrowly Russian story may be narrated on a broader, more inclusive canvas. This is something that I myself have tried to do on questions such as the legal and social status of imperial Russia's diverse clergies and the nomadic members of its nobility, the development of the empire's documentary regime of civil acts, and the secularization of ecclesiastical property across the empire's multiple religious traditions⁷. I regard this approach as no less important after 2014 or 2022 than before. As concerns archives, two months recently in Baku, Tbilisi, and Yerevan provided me with a rich harvest of material, but the fact is that I had planned this trip long before February 2022; it had nothing directly to do with the war. Perhaps my case is unique, but I can say only that the war is inflecting my work rather than transforming it.

It perhaps goes without saying that the war has made the historical relationship between Russia and Ukraine a more central topic of inquiry. Here my inclination is to tread gingerly, since I claim no expertise on Ukraine. I would merely propose that against the fully understandable inclination at present to emphasize the differences between Ukraine and Russia (in the past as well as the present), we ought also to keep in mind their intertwined character – that is, the ways in which Ukraine is implicated in the history of Russia and the USSR. This was something I could discern even while working on my first book about the native peoples of the Volga region. Here, hundreds of miles east of Moscow, one could readily see that developments in Russia's western provinces were central to processes in Russia as a whole. Early-modern religious developments in Ukraine proved critical to the emergence of modern Orthodoxy in Russia and even help to explain a program of mass conversion of native Volga peoples in the mid-eighteenth century. Insurrection in the west in 1830 and 1863 altered tsarist preoccupations in the eastern provinces of European Russia, placing more emphasis on cultural assimilation and significantly altering Russian perception of Tatars and Islam. Even a basic familiarity with the national question in the Soviet period reveals that Ukraine replaced Poland as the most challenging aspect

⁷ P.W. Werth, *In the State's Embrace? Civil Acts in an Imperial Order*, «Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History», 7 (2006), n. 3, pp. 433-58; Id., *Soslovie and the "Foreign" Clergies in Imperial Russia: Estate Rights or Service Rights?*, «Cahiers du monde russe», 51 (2010), n. 2/3, pp. 419-40; Id.-G. Sultangalieva-U. Tuleshova, *Nomadic Nobles: Pastoralism and Privilege in the Empire's Kazakh Steppe*, «Slavic Review», 81 (2022), n. 1, pp. 77-96; Id., *Ecclesiastical Property and Imperial Russia's Multi-Confessional "Spiritual Domain"* (unpublished manuscript).

of the country's multi-national existence in the twentieth century. The religious history of the USSR, especially after the Second World War, cannot be written without Ukraine, since its western portion (annexed only in 1939) retained so many institutions that had been decimated elsewhere in interwar Soviet anti-religious campaigns. The role of Ukrainians in running the USSR in the postwar period, especially under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, also emerges clearly for anyone interested to look. And as Serhii Plokhy and Vladislav Zubok have shown, the relationship between Ukraine and Russia was the critical one for the collapse of the USSR⁸. The larger point is that a good historian of imperial Russia and the Soviet Union unavoidably becomes a student of Ukraine as well, at least to a degree. This is not to conflate Ukraine and Russia, but merely to recognize connections between the two. Perhaps new research will offer different interpretations, but for the moment at least the war does not appear to have negated such propositions, even if it has rightly alerted many to Ukraine's distinctiveness.

To round out this brief essay, I want to highlight an aspect of Russia's territorial history that might help to illuminate the current situation in a different way. I am currently writing a brief territorial history of Russia⁹, which seeks to account for the spatial scope of «Russia» in its diverse forms – Muscovy, the Russian Empire, the USSR, and the Russian Federation – over the last seven centuries: which territories did the country actually occupy at various stages of its existence, and how and when did those places become part of «Russia»¹⁰? In order to tell a seven-hundred-year story concisely, I posit a pattern to Russia's territorial history: a series of phases that each exhibited initially enlargement and then crisis, with the latter typically involving territorial retrenchment or even challenge to the country as a sovereign entity. Thus, the first chapter traces the country's growth from the early Muscovite era to its emergence as one of a small handful of major powers in north-eastern Europe. It then recounts a crisis beginning in the late sixteenth century, the so-called Time of Troubles, that subjected the country to foreign invasion and threatened its very existence. The next chapter indicates how Muscovy's emergence from the crisis enabled another round of expansion until the next crisis appeared in war and revolution, with its culmination in 1919, when the eventual victors in Russia's civil war – the Bolsheviks –

⁸ S. Plokhy, *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union*, Basic Books, New York 2014; V. Zubok, *Collapse: The Fall of the Soviet Union*, Yale UP, New Haven 2020.

⁹ Imaginatively entitled *A Territorial History of Russia* (under contract with Bloomsbury Publishers).

¹⁰ The project bears some similarity to the recent volume edited by O. Palko-C. Ardeleanu, *Making Ukraine: Negotiating, Contesting, and Drawing the Borders in the Twentieth Century*, McGill-Queen's UP, Montreal 2022; except that it a) focuses on Russia rather than Ukraine; b) covers seven centuries rather than one; and c) has one author rather than thirteen. It will probably be inferior.

controlled only a limited portion of the country. Another round of enlargement – in this case the partial reconstitution of the empire as the Soviet Union – followed, before a new crisis, culminating in 1942 (the height of the Nazis' territorial advance), threatened the country yet again. And a final crisis (for the moment at least) came in 1991, when the country ruled from Moscow lost nearly half of its population and almost a quarter of its territory. In the summer of 2023, it appeared momentarily that the mutiny of Evgenii Prigozhin might precipitate a new crisis that could undo the expansion of 2014-22 and produce even deeper collapse. Perhaps this will still occur, though it seems impossible to say presently.

The trajectory just described suggests deeper rhythms to Russia's territorial history, even as crucial aspects of the story remain a function of contingency. And strikingly, the last decade now fits into this larger pattern, even as the final outcome of the war remains anything but certain. We can refuse to recognize Russia's annexation of Crimea, but for all practical purposes the peninsula has been part of Russia since 2014 and remains so at the time of writing. And though Russia's ability to hold the territory it presently occupies in eastern Ukraine, let alone fully control the four oblasts it formally annexed in September of 2022, for the moment at least Russia has factually expanded at Ukrainian expense. Talk of «creeping annexation» now appears in relation to Belarus, as well.

Whether any of this is sustainable is a different matter. There is much to suggest that it is not. Russia now finds itself in a much weaker position relative to the past and is in some danger of reverting to a status from which Muscovy emerged in the fifteenth century: as a protectorate of its eastern neighbor (in this case China rather than the Golden Horde). The international order is also different and much less friendly to territorial conquest than it was in the past. The United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act (the USSR signed both) ban the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Russia's demographic situation is terrible – and worsening as a result of the war – while the invasion may accelerate a green transition in other countries, to the detriment of Russia's economy in the longer term. The very fact that more people now talk of Russia's own possible dismemberment into regional or national components suggests a vulnerability that probably would not have existed were it not for the recent invasion. A new crisis may thus be brewing. Yet the story of Russia's changing territorial scope also suggests a remarkable adaptability and capacity for enduring crisis. As Timothy Colton has remarked, Russia is a «phoenix state» that has «arisen again and again from the ashes»¹¹.

¹¹ T.J. Colton, *Russia: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2016, p. 1.

Several colleagues have encouraged me to do more in my territorial history of Russia to condemn Moscow explicitly for its recent annexation(s) of Ukrainian territory. Perhaps they are right. But I sense that most thinking people can reach their own conclusions without my finger-wagging. And if I engage in such censure in that case, then I really must also condemn Moscow for its annexation of Tver in 1485. And everything between then and now. The result would be a screed. Which is to say that even in times of war and crisis – perhaps then more than at other times – we need scholarship that is of the present moment without being in thrall to it.

Olena Palko*

Anti-Soviet, anti-Russian, or simply Ukrainian? Ukraine's Identity Politics since 1991

Although the 2014 annexation of Crimea has been generally considered illegal, many in the West seemingly have come to terms with the Russian “right” to Crimea, pointing at Ukraine’s “weaknesses” as precursors for this “crisis”. The war has been ongoing since 2014 claiming thousands of Ukrainian lives; and yet the world was shocked when the Russian troops marched into Ukraine on 24 February 2022. While the origins of this brutal war lie with Russia, not Ukraine, I was keen to accept the invitation of the editors to reflect on the official identity politics in Ukraine since 1991, focusing on the repeated attempts by the political elites to challenge Soviet-era narratives. In particular, I would like to highlight the impact of the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine on revisiting the Soviet past and identify potential avenues for re-evaluating the Soviet legacy in historical research and writing.

On 24 August 1991, the Ukrainian Parliament declared Ukraine’s independence. Their decision was confirmed at a referendum that took place on 1 December 1991, when 90,3% voted in favour of independence, with 84,2% turnout. Scholars suggest this was a reaction to the failure of the coup and the collapse of central authorities in Moscow, rather than a genuine desire for Ukraine’s full independence¹². Indeed, earlier that year, on 17 March 1991, 71,4% of Ukraine’s citizens (with a comparable turnout) answered «yes» to preserving the Soviet Union as «a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics». For Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, the break-up of the Soviet Union was seen as a major geopolitical catastrophe, «a disintegration of

* History Department, University of Basel, Hirschgässlein 21, 4051 Basel; olena.palko@unibas.ch

¹² A. Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation*, Yale UP, New Haven 2000.

historical Russia under the name of the Soviet Union»¹³. Hence he called for arms in early 2022 to right this historical wrong. The Kremlin's military campaign has seen Ukraine's population, regardless of everyday language, rally around the central government in Kyiv, effectively halting further efforts by Moscow to manipulate the country's ethnic and linguistic differences. Already in December 2022, 95% of respondents answered «Ukrainian» to the question «Which nationality do you associate yourself with?», against some 64% only five years ago¹⁴.

Ukraine's independence in August 1991 did not mark a clean break from the Soviet past. Unlike in the Baltic States, in Ukraine, the anti-communist opposition was too weak to seize control over the republic. The Communist party, although having lost its monopoly in the first moderately free elections in 1990, still held a decisive majority – 332 seats out of 442 elected national deputies. Consequently, the political regime of the 1990s in Ukraine reflected a compromise between the «national-democratic» opposition and the so-called sovereign communists. Although Ukraine became a legal successor of the UkrSSR, the historical Ukrainian symbols associated with the national struggle – the yellow-blue flag, the coat of arms (the trident) and the anthem, were accepted by the largely ideologically indifferent former communist Nomenklatura who then became the «party of power» and found themselves in the position of state builders¹⁵.

This compromise also impacted identity politics. Wishing to integrate Ukrainian citizens with diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds into a viable national community the first two presidents Leonid Kravchuk (1991-94) and Leonid Kuchma (1994-2005) pursued a pragmatic and ambivalent memory politics; they avoided divisive topics or problematization of the Soviet past. The pantheon of Ukrainian heroes was not dismantled, but extended to incorporate state-builders of the past, such as the leader of the Ukrainian national revolution Mykhailo Hrushevsky or the Cossack Hetman Ivan Mazepa, who defected to the Swedes during the Battle of Poltava in 1709. Kuchma further promoted the view of a «common history» for Russia and Ukraine, as manifested in the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the Pereiaslav Treaty (the Ukrainian Cossacks' decision to ally with Moscow in 1654), and the view on the Second World War as the «Great Patriotic War».

Instead, national democrats determined the normative vision of Ukrainian history, according to which the whole history of Ukraine started to be

¹³ *Putin Laments Soviet Breakup as Demise of "Historical Russia", amid Ukraine Fears*, «Radio Free Europe», 13 December 2021 (www.rferl.org/a/putin-historical-russia-soviet-breakup-ukraine/31606186.html).

¹⁴ V. Kulyk, *Mova ta identychnist' v Ukraïni na kinets' 2022-go*, «Zbruc», 7 January 2023.

¹⁵ T. Zhurzhenko, *A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis*, «Die Friedens-Warte», 89 (2014), n. 1/2, p. 252.

presented as a centuries-old struggle to build an independent and united country against various occupiers (above all Russian), eventually leading to restoring Ukraine's independence in 1991. Nationalization of the past also reduced the "nation" to ethnic Ukrainians only, underplaying the heterogeneity of Ukraine's historic landscape. The narratives of suffering and victimhood dominated historical research and writing when historians were mostly preoccupied with revealing the crimes of the Soviet regime. Overall, using the words of Mark von Hagen, the narrative of history in independent Ukraine replaced the familiar dogmatic approach of Marxism-Leninism and dialectical materialism with national teleology¹⁶.

The Orange Revolution in 2004 challenged this post-Soviet ideological amorphism. Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010), who became president in its aftermath, had a strong opinion about Ukrainian history and saw collective memory as crucial for identity-making. In this context, he set up the Institute of National Memory in 2006, a new research institution with executive powers, which aimed to «restore and preserve national memory of the Ukrainian people»¹⁷, and ordered the opening of the archives of the former Soviet secret services. Three main concerns dominated his mnemonic agenda. First, Yushchenko elevated the Cossack past as «a symbol of freedom, valour and indomitable spirit» of Ukraine¹⁸. Here, at least two large memorialisation projects should be mentioned: the construction of the historical and cultural complex «Zaporozhian Sich» on the Khortytsia island on the Dnipro river, and the restoration of Kyrylo Rozumovsky's palace in Baturyn.

Second, Yushchenko challenged the Soviet-era interpretations of the Second World War. On the one hand, the president wished to incorporate diverse experiences of the war; during his tenure, historians started to discuss the occupation and incorporation of western Ukraine by the Red Army (1939), deportation of the Crimean Tatars (1944), Polish-Ukrainian dialogue about the Volhynian massacre of 1943 was initiated. On the other hand, Ukrainian wartime experiences were seen through the prism of national liberation. In this context, Yushchenko called for a reassessment of the role of the Ukrainian nationalist organizations during the war, such as the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and its paramilitary formation the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), and decorated its controversial leaders (Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych) as «Heroes of Ukraine». The president also called for the reconciliation of the UPA and Soviet veterans.

¹⁶ M. von Hagen, *Does Ukraine Have a History?*, «Slavic Review», 54 (1995), n. 3, pp. 658-73.

¹⁷ *Polozhennia pro Ukraïnskyi instytut natsionalnoi pamiaty* (<https://uinp.gov.ua/pro-instytut/pravovi-zasady-diyalnosti>).

¹⁸ *Yushchenko: zaporizka zemlia-osoblyva i sviata*, «Radio Svoboda», 10 October 2023.

Third, Yushchenko promoted memorializing historical events that could contribute to the narrative of Ukrainian suffering from the Soviet authorities. The Museum of Soviet Occupation in Kyiv, a memorial to the victims of Stalinist repressions in Bykivnia, the National Museum-Memorial of Victims of the [Nazi and Soviet] Occupation Regimes, or the Prison on Lonski Street in Lviv were opened under his presidency. But Yushchenko's key political and diplomatic priority was the recognition of the Holodomor, the man-made famine of 1932-33, as genocide of the Ukrainian people. A relevant law was submitted to the Ukrainian parliament in 2006, ahead of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor, and the unveiling of the museum in Kyiv in 2008.

Overall, post-2004 identity politics initiated by Yushchenko set a foundation stone for Ukraine's de-communization and its eventual distancing from Russia. His course further complicated the relationship with Russia, which could not let Ukraine slip away from its political or ideological control. Most of those initiatives were reversed in 2010, when Viktor Yanukovich (2010-2014), representing the Russia-oriented Party of Regions, assumed the presidency. Supported by the Communist party, Yanukovich reversed the recognition of the Holodomor as a genocide, recalled the decorations of the OUN leaders Bandera and Shukhevych, reinstated pompous celebration of the Victory Day (9 May) with the use of the Soviet-era insignia, and consented to the erection of the monument to Stalin in Zaporizhzhia in 2010. During his tenure, the Parliament also issued a law elevating the status of the Russian language. Yanukovich also downgraded the role of the Institute of National Memory to that of a state-funded research institution, which was run under his presidency by an active communist party member, historian Valerii Soldatenko.

The fall of the Moscow-backed Yanukovich regime during the Revolution of Dignity, a name given to a series of mass protests in Kyiv and other large cities in late 2013-early 2014, as well as the subsequent Russian occupation of Crimea and the war in Donbas galvanized the debate about the Soviet legacy. The so-called decommunization debate was spearheaded by the Institute of National Memory, restored to its former capacity in November 2014 under the presidency of Petro Poroshenko (2014-2019). For the Institute's new director, historian Volodymyr Viatrovych, legitimizing the discourse of Ukraine's century-long colonial fight against Russia and the Soviet empire became his *raison d'être*. Decommunization, hence, was a way to revisit the past and purify Ukraine from the remnants of the Soviet era.

A new framework for redefining the Soviet past was provided by four controversial «memory laws», adopted in May 2015, set to complete the processes initiated by the Orange Revolution. These included a law on access to the archives of the former repressive organs; on the commemoration of the Second World War; a law on honouring the fighters for Ukraine's independ-

ence; and a law on Nazi and Communist symbols and a ban on their propaganda. The first two laws were the least problematic and were generally positively received by both academics and the (international) community¹⁹. The first law provided free access to the former secret services archive, an unparalleled decision in comparison to other former Soviet republics. The second law refrained from the Soviet myth of the «Great Patriotic War» and its timeframe (1941-1945), replacing it with the European narrative of the Second World War (1939-45) as a great tragedy of the twentieth century. While reaffirming May 9 as the national holiday, the law also introduced May 8 as the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation.

The third law was much more controversial since it effectively rehabilitated the above-mentioned nationalist OUN and UPA without problematizing their role in the Holocaust and in other instances of interethnic violence during the war. In this regard, the most concerning was the law's provision against «public denial of the legitimacy of the struggle for independence of Ukraine» seen by many as an imposition of a single historical narrative and outlawing alternative or critical interpretations of those events²⁰. The last and fourth law equated the Soviet (1917-1991) and Nazi rule as totalitarian regimes. It had the biggest practical implications since it provided for their «denunciation» through a wide range of measures from banning «totalitarian symbols» to dismantling monuments to Soviet leaders (Lenin, above all) and changing names of cities, towns, and streets to those not linked to the Communist period.

Overall, these memory laws were supposed to undo the legacy of the Soviet Union, presenting it as an illegitimate criminal regime and a form of Russian dominance, as well as mobilize Ukrainians against it. Andrii Portnov suggests that these laws intended to draw a new symbolic dividing line between post-Maidan Ukraine and Putin's Russia; the division was constructed «not according to language or religious identification but alongside the attitude to the Soviet past»²¹. Although each of the laws has its benefits and pitfalls, read together they contribute to the above-mentioned essentialisation of Ukraine and uncritical glorification of all those fighting for its eventual independence. It leads to a selective and often politically motivated interest in particular events in Ukraine's history (those in support of the official metanarrative) and undermines other (less fitting) experiences. In this regard, one can refer back to the celebration of the centenary of the

¹⁹ For the “memory laws” in English: <https://uinp.gov.ua/dokumenty/normatyvno-pravovi-akty-rozrobleni-v-instituti/zakony>.

²⁰ D.R. Marples, *Open Letter from Scholars and Experts on Ukraine Re. the so-called “Anti-Communist Law”*, «Krytyka. Thinking Ukraine», March 2015 (<https://krytyka.com/en/articles/open-letter-scholars-and-experts-ukraine-re-so-called-anti-communist-law>).

²¹ A. Portnov, “*De-Communisation” and Legislating History in Post-Maidan Ukraine*, «Aspen Review», 2017, n. 4, pp. 66-71.

Ukrainian revolution of 1917-21. While 1917 was generally dismissed in Russia, in Ukraine the commemorative practices focused on constructing a narrative of a struggle between the Ukrainian forces (presented as a unified front) against the Russian occupants. In this context, Viatrovych defined the last century as Ukraine's «hundred-year war» for independence²².

While the academic community concentrates predominantly on the law's uncritical treatment of the Ukrainian nationalists, my primary concern, as a historian specializing in the interwar period, is the law's black-and-white depiction of the Soviet era. In a way, all my academic career has been affected by the dynamics of the academic discussion in Ukraine initiated by Russia's war on Ukraine. In my numerous publications, I tried to fight back against those narrow perceptions of the Ukrainian past. Presenting Ukrainians as victims of external forces contributes to the image of Ukraine as bereft of agency. Banning or even criminalizing discussions of the Soviet past discourages historians from studying Ukraine's own socialist and (non-Bolshevik) communist tradition, the political and intellectual current in the 1920s Soviet Ukraine which in many regards defined the course of Soviet policies in the interwar decades and resulted in Ukraine's advantaged status within the Soviet Union. It prevents historians from critical engagement with the Soviet era, which remains largely understudied. Moreover, the law does not differentiate between the early Soviet decades, Stalinism, and the late Soviet period, rejecting more nuanced research into everyday experiences under communism, instead reducing it to that of victimhood. Lastly, the laws attempt to impose a single historical narrative and prescribe ideologically loaded evaluations of the past on a country with distinct regional and cultural identities, as well as historical experiences.

The 2015 memory laws were primarily directed towards undoing the Soviet legacy. Nonetheless, Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine contributed to strengthening anti-Russian attitudes among Ukrainian society when the Soviet era started to be seen as one of the stages of centuries-long Russian domination and occupation of Ukraine. When we speak of the impact of the invasion on the field, the debates around «decolonization» of Ukraine substituted those of «decommunization», when the ongoing Ukrainian defiance against Russia started to be seen as (part of a) colonial war against the empire.

While until 2022, decommunization was primarily a top-down enterprise regulated by state laws and supervised by state institutions (with penalties introduced for not abiding by these laws), de-Russification (as a form of decolonization) became a grassroots initiative, a chaotic public response to the ontological threats posed by the Russian invasion. Since February 2022, de-Russification has included renaming of streets and public places commemorating

²² V. Viatrovych, *Nasha stolitnia. Korotki narysy pro dovhu viinu*, Fabula, Kharkiv 2023.

Russian historical figures and events; destruction and removal of monuments for Russian figures, cancelling Russian (-language) cultural products, revisiting linguistic policies and daily linguistic practices in Ukraine. In this context, historians and scholars of Ukraine turned to the past to look for intellectual precedence of anti-Russian sentiment. Ironically, Ukrainian left theorists of the early 1920s became the symbols of the Ukrainian anticolonial struggle²³.

Although Russia's invasion aimed, one may suggest, to align Ukraine with Moscow's interests, merging parts of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, or even recreating the Soviet Union, the events of the last eighteen months have achieved quite an opposite effect. The full-scale invasion which began on February 24 accelerated the process of Ukraine's nation-building and united the country in ways that would have been difficult to imagine just two years ago. The war also spotlighted historians and other scholars of Ukraine, incorporating Ukraine's voice into major scholarly debates. Since the full-scale invasion, every respected forum engaged in a decolonization debate, questioning what it would mean in the case of Eastern European and Soviet history. Mainly those debates focus on the necessary changes in Western academia. However, equally important is the question of whether any changes are needed in native Ukrainian scholarship. War provides opportunities, but it is not without dangers. The main risk is that historical and mnemonic practices postwar can further cement the ethnonational perspective of victimhood, and uncritical perception of the past as a teleological movement towards Ukraine's sovereignty. As the poet Kateryna Kalytko mentioned, we are living in «tens year of the three-hundred-year war» against Russia²⁴. And although Russian supremacy over Ukraine is incontestable, this is the role of historians to interpret those experiences of the last centuries.

John-Paul Himka*

War, Memory Politics, and Ukrainian Nationalists

How has the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia impacted my work as a historian? Although I have changed my views over the course of a career that has lasted more than half a century, the outbreak of the war in February

²³ S. Velychenko, *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red: The Ukrainian Marxist Critique of Russian Communist Rule in Ukraine, 1918-1925*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2015.

²⁴ S. Cheliak, "Oдна справа мати любов у собі, а інша справа-вміти туди любов либути". *Rozмова z Katerynou Kalytko*, «Suspil'ne Kul'tura», 4 July 2023 (<https://suspilne.media/518485-odna-sprava-mati-lubov-u-sobi-a-insa-sprava-vmiti-cu-lubov-lubiti-rozмова-z-katerinou-kalitko>).

²⁴ Department of History, Classics, and Religion, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G1C9; jhimka@ualberta.ca

2022 has not led to any reevaluation of the conclusions presented in the book I published in 2021 on Ukrainian nationalists and the Holocaust²⁵. It remains the case that the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and its armed force, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (known by its Ukrainian initials, UPA), were engaged in the mass killing of Poles, Jews, other non-Ukrainian nationalities, communists, and Soviet POWs during the Second World War. For all the instrumentalization of this dark history by Putin's Russia, there is no reason to question facts backed by ample evidence.

However, there are a number of ways that the war has influenced or intruded upon my work as a scholar. One is that it has led me to write pieces that lie at the crossroads of scholarship and journalism. I have been writing these more «publicistic» pieces primarily for the political left, arguing for Ukraine against what I consider to be Russia's imperialist war²⁶. Journalism is far from my comfort zone, but even so I have learned to write little texts of seven or eight hundred words. I have a whole series of such pieces on the website of the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, most of which concern the prewar history of Ukraine.

Not only am I learning to write in a new form, but I am also writing on topics that I had never emphasized in my research in the past. Most of my historical work has concerned the western regions of Ukraine. I wrote a trilogy on Ukrainians in Habsburg Galicia, a book on sacral iconography in the Carpathian region, and a book on nationalists and the Holocaust, which concerned primarily the western regions of Galicia, Volhynia, and Bukovina. I had not done much original research on the Russian empire or the Soviet Union, but now – with the war on – I found myself writing a lot more about the Russification of Ukraine under the tsars and Soviets, endeavoring to explain why I regard the Russian invasion as an imperialist project. Along the same lines, I wrote an introduction to a forthcoming edition of Ivan Dzyuba's classic critique of Soviet nationality policy, *Internationalism or Russification?*, to be published by Resistance Books. Also, I had never before entertained the idea of writing my own survey of Ukrainian history, but when the war broke out I did write one, one that could be read in an hour or so²⁷.

Furthermore, the war also brought me to continue some of the research I had been doing on memory politics, especially in regard to OUN-UPA. Since the German public has been rather concerned by the appearance of far-right forces in Ukraine, I was approached to write a chapter on radical Ukrainian

²⁵ J.P. Himka, *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust: OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941-1944*, Ibidem-Verlag Haunschild, Stuttgart 2021.

²⁶ Cfr. in particular Id., *Ukraine's Geopolitical Precarity: A Historian's Perspective*, «Spectre», 6 July 2022 (<https://spectrejournal.com/ukraines-geopolitical-precarity>).

²⁷ *Ten Turning Points: A Brief History of Ukraine*. «Ukraine Solidarity Campaign», 13 April 2022 (<https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org/2022/04/13/ten-turning-points-a-brief-history-of-ukraine>).

nationalism, past and present, for a German-language volume coming out in fall 2023²⁸. I undertook two new themes in that contribution. One was to connect some of the dots linking the heritage of OUN-UPA and the appearance of contemporary radical right nationalism in Ukraine, as represented, for example, by the Social-National/Svoboda party, Right Sector, and the Azov battalion.

The other new theme, and one which I will develop further in the rest of the present text, is why the legacy of such virulent and violent nationalists as OUN-UPA found a receptive audience, at first in the three Galician oblasts of Ukraine (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil) and then in Kyiv and throughout Ukraine. Before moving on to additional thoughts on that issue, let me summarize in point form what I have already written about in more detail in the article for the German volume:

- The German occupation of Galicia (Distrikt Galizien) in 1941-44 was more favorable to the Ukrainian ethnic element than in any of the other zones of occupation on Ukrainian territory. For Galicia's Ukrainians, the Soviet regime of 1939-41 and 1944 onward was the most repressive, traumatic, and enduring.
- After the war, OUN-UPA led an insurgency against the Soviet reoccupation of Galicia, which was succeeded by a brutal Soviet counterinsurgency.
- Following the death of Stalin, numerous nationalist prisoners were amnestied. Those who returned to Lviv kept in touch with one another. Many from this group survived into the 1980s and beyond.
- Dissidents of the 1960s and 1970s encountered members of OUN in the gulag and were favorably impressed by them. The dissidents were released in the late 1980s and, back in Ukraine, they advocated for the rehabilitation of OUN-UPA.
- Already during the Gorbachev reforms, but particularly after independence, Ukrainian nationalists from the overseas diaspora moved to Ukraine, where they distributed their literature and transferred various institutions.
- Promoters of the OUN-UPA legacy either denied or did not consider the radical nationalists' crimes against non-Ukrainians during the Second World War.
- Partly this was the result of the Soviet suppression of Holocaust research, the state's antisemitic policies, and its complete lack of interest in the ethnic cleansing of Poles in western Ukraine during the war.

Partly, too, this was the result of the eradication and assimilation of the traditional Polish and Jewish communities of Ukraine, whose remnants could have little influence on state policy or public discourse.

²⁸ F. Davies (Hrsg.), *Die Ukraine in Europa: Traum und Trauma einer Nation*, WBG Theiss, Darmstadt (forthcoming).

These are the factors which, I believe, led to the emergence of a grassroots cult of OUN-UPA in the Galician oblasts.

When independence was declared, veterans of UPA were still alive, and they sought recognition for their war service equal to that of the veterans of the Red Army. Efforts during the presidencies of Leonid Kravchuk (1991-94) and Leonid Kuchma (1994-2005) to reconcile the two sets of veterans proved impossible. Of course, the conflict between the veteran groups found its polarizing reflection also in the press and in political maneuvers. The political elite turned to professional historians to help sort out the dispute. From 1997 to 2005, a «working group» under the leadership of historian Stanislav Kulchytsky investigated the history of OUN and UPA. Although the historians did not pronounce definitively on whether the wartime nationalists should be rehabilitated, their texts did imply a positive answer. An important, and limiting, aspect of their approach to the problem was that they worked within a Soviet intellectual paradigm. The Soviets had never been interested in the nationalists' crimes against Poles or Jews; for them, the major issues were disloyalty to the Soviet Motherland and collaboration with the German and Romanian occupiers. In this intellectual context, the working group completely ignored OUN-UPA's antisemitism and mass murder of Jews and also interpreted its mass murder of Poles as an unfortunate tragedy for which both sides were responsible.

By the time the working group concluded its investigation, Ukrainian politics had turned in a new direction. The Orange Revolution of 2004, which was a major watershed for Ukraine, was precipitated by falsified election results. Two candidates had faced off in the second round of a presidential election: Viktor Yushchenko, who had a strong popular base in western Ukraine and was considered a pro-European candidate, and Viktor Yanukovich, who was the candidate favored by outgoing President Kuchma and the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin. Thousands of Ukrainians, in which both young people and Galicians were disproportionately represented, gathered at Independence square (aka the Maidan) to protest the purported victory of Yanukovich. They forced the electoral commission to rerun the election, this time with international observers present to prevent fraud, and Yushchenko won. The geography of the voting indicated extreme regional polarization; as an example, in the final run off, Lviv oblast voted 94 percent in favor of Yushchenko, and Donetsk oblast 94 percent in favor of Yanukovich. The Orange Revolution cemented an alliance between pro-democracy and pro-Western activists, on the one hand, and nationalists who saw Russia as their greatest enemy, on the other. They were opposed by the supporters of the defeated Yanukovich, who rallied around the Party of Regions, which looked more to Russia than the West and appealed in particular to the Russophone population of the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine.

As Russian-Ukrainian relations deteriorated after 2004, the bowdlerized myth of OUN-UPA served as an instrument of differentiation from Russia, a separate Ukrainian version of the Second World War, radically other than the triumphant Russian narrative of victory over the German fascists in the Great Patriotic War.

Yushchenko initiated the state glorification of OUN-UPA. One of the first signals was a postage stamp issued on 29 June 2007 to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Roman Shukhevych, a prominent figure in OUN who became the supreme commander of UPA. The stamp included the emblem of OUN. As Yushchenko was leaving office in 2010, he posthumously bestowed the award of Hero of Ukraine on the OUN leader Stepan Bandera and declared OUN and UPA to have been fighters for Ukrainian independence. A related aspect of Yushchenko's memory politics was his campaign to have the man-made famine of 1932-34 (the Holodomor) internationally recognized as a genocide against the Ukrainian people; the campaign was framed in ethnonationalist terms, anti-Russian with a discernible undercurrent of antisemitism.

But in the 2010 presidential election, with Crimea and the eastern Donbas still able to participate, Yushchenko was defeated by Yanukovich. The new president revoked Bandera's Hero status and also reclassified the famine of 1932-33 from a genocide to a tragedy. Yanukovich never finished his term of office. He was driven out from Ukraine by the Euromaidan revolution of 2014. During the Euromaidan, radical right nationalists carried a large portrait of Bandera as well as the red-and-black flags of OUN. As a result of the Euromaidan, the OUN-UPA greeting – «Glory to Ukraine (*Slava Ukraini*)! Glory to the heroes!» – became normalized in Ukraine. Another, more consequential result was that Russia invaded Crimea and gave military support to separatists in the eastern Donbas.

In this situation, the cult of OUN-UPA reached new heights in Ukraine, especially after the businessman Petro Poroshenko was elected to the presidency in June 2014. He appointed a fervent promoter of OUN, Volodymyr Viatrovych, as head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (known by its Ukrainian initials UINP). Viatrovych drafted, and the Ukrainian parliament passed, a series of decommunization laws in 2015. The laws specified that OUN-UPA had to be recognized as fighters for Ukrainian independence. They also required the renaming of localities and streets that had any reference to communism and communists. For example, Dnipropetrovsk was renamed Dnipro; the “-petrovsk” had to be dropped from Dnipropetrovsk because it referred to the Ukrainian communist Hryhorii Petrovsky. Many streets were also renamed because they referred to Russia or Russians; for example, Moscow prospect was renamed Stepan Bandera prospect in 2016. Poroshenko and Viatrovych also created a new public holiday, Defenders' Day; the date they chose was the feast of the Protection of the

Mother of God (1 October in the Gregorian calendar), which was also the date that nationalist Ukrainians celebrated the founding of UPA.

The State celebration of the wartime radical nationalists did not evolve in isolation. It was part and parcel of other developments that headed in a similar direction. One of these was the evolution of the vision of the Ukrainian nation from a civic to an ethnic entity. When Ukraine became independent in 1991, the new State made no distinction between ethnic Ukrainians and other peoples of Ukraine. On 1 November 1991 Ukraine's Parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*) passed a *Declaration of the Rights of the Nationalities of Ukraine*, which «guarantees all nations, national groups, [and] citizens living on its territory equal political, economic, social, and cultural rights» as well as the «right to freely use their native languages in all spheres of social life, including education, production, the reception and diffusion of information». It stated also that «on the territory of Ukraine live its citizens of over one hundred nationalities, who – together with Ukrainians – comprise the fifty-two-million strong people (*narod*) of Ukraine»²⁹. But under Poroshenko the Ukrainian parliament passed laws that restricted the use of minority languages in education, particularly Russian and Hungarian. The Russian-language press was also restricted. However, the context is important: these measures were undertaken primarily to strengthen the woeful position of the Ukrainian language in Ukraine after a century and a half of systematic Russification under the tsars and Soviets. And although Ukraine espouses freedom of religion, the Poroshenko government began to persecute the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC); this church had self-rule, but it was spiritually under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow. In 2018 Poroshenko had come to an agreement with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to approve the formation of a new ecclesiastical community, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU). Government officials and sometimes paramilitaries began to seize churches of the UOC and transfer them to the state-supported OCU.

Poroshenko campaigned for president in 2019 on what was clearly perceived as a nationalist program. His campaign slogan was «Army, language, faith», referring to building up the military to fight the pro-Russian insurgents in the eastern Donbas, his measures to shore up the Ukrainian language, and his promotion of the OCU. However, the electorate was not enthused. Instead, they elected Ukraine's first celebrity president, the comedian Volodymyr Zelensky, who was considered a reformer, an opponent of corruption and the oligarchic economic system.

Zelensky dismissed the nationalist Viatrovykh as the head of the UINP and replaced him with Anton Drobovykh, a philosopher who had also

²⁹ *Deklaratsiia prav natsional'nostei Ukrainy*, «Verkhovna Rada», 1 November 1991 (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1771-12#Text>).

been involved in the education program of a planned Babi Yar memorial. Drobovych promised to make the Institute more liberal and inclusive of the various peoples of Ukraine. Drobovych neither promoted the cult of OUN-UPA, nor did he attempt to undue Viatrovych's work. On his watch, however – and even as the war with Russia rages – OUN-UPA has not been featured in celebrations or commemorations organized by the Institute.

Zelensky also promised to stop interference in church affairs. He kept his promise as long as there was peace, but a few months into the war, he accelerated the persecution of the UOC, even though that ecclesiastical body had broken all formal ties with the Moscow patriarchate after the invasion.

The points I have been making about memory politics and the conceptualization of the nation in Ukraine are all prehistory. The current war will change Ukraine profoundly. A different country will rise from the ruins.

Holly Case*, Oleksii Shebanov, Maria Gomberg Shkolnikova*****
A New Age of Questions?

Five years ago I [Holly Case] published a book titled *The Age of Questions*, an attempt at an aggregate history of the Eastern, Polish, Jewish, social, woman, Ukrainian, and other questions. The book traced the emergence and trajectory of such questions over the «extremely long nineteenth century (1770-1970)», exploring six distinct interpretations of the age and its significance. Was the essence of the age to be sought in its channeling of modern nationalism, or progressivism? Did it tend toward genocide, or federative integration? Was it of its time, or timeless? Was it all-important, or more of an attention-grabbing stunt? Is it definitively over, or ongoing? The chapters of the book gave starkly different answers to these questions even as they outlined a set of tendencies observable across interpretations and individual questions.

Since the book's publication, the question I have most often received – and one that other scholars have already sought to answer³⁰ – is whether we are still living in the age of questions. In the Preface, I wrote that

for the most part questions have become the stuff of historical monographs or other forms of retrospective analysis. Nowadays we speak of “resolving issues” or “crises”

* History Department, Brown University, 330 Sharpe House, Providence RI 02912; Holly_Case@brown.edu

** History Department, Brown University, 330 Sharpe House, Providence RI 02912; oleksii_shebanov@brown.edu

*** History Department, Brown University, 330 Sharpe House, Providence RI 02912; alexandra_gomberg_shkolnikova@brown.edu

³⁰ This includes a planned edited volume on *Global Challenges* by Tobias Werron *et al.*, and a forthcoming book on *Crisis* by Balázs Trencsényi.

in the international and domestic political spheres, or engage in scholarly or public “debates” on matters of culture, as opposed to “solving questions”. Perhaps this is why Vladimir Putin’s reference to the Ukrainian question in 2014 did not arouse much interest: we no longer live in an age of questions. And yet the *New York Times* has recently reported on the “French question”; the Scottish referendum and Brexit have reintroduced the “English”, “Irish”, and “Catalonian” questions; and the “migrant (refugee) question” now regularly haunts European headlines. Could it be that we are now on the cusp of another age of questions? If so, we might do well to consider what the first one wrought³¹.

In the epilogue to the first chapter on the nationalist and nationalizing essence of the age, I noted Putin’s 2014 reference to the «Ukrainian question», highlighting the extent to which the question had over time been «nationalized as a primarily Russian preoccupation» that «the Russian leadership has self-consciously revived». The chapter concluded that «The fate of the “Ukrainian question” in Russia and the “Eastern question” in Turkey bear witness to the danger of suggesting that the age of questions was a coherent international phenomenon that has – for better or worse – come to an end. [...] Perhaps the age is alive and well, still moving through time with a markedly national cadence» (pp. 69-71).

Since «perhaps» is a squishy word for a matter whose sharpness is plain for all to see, the editors of this forum have asked me: «[S]tarting from your idea that Putin, with the attack on Ukraine in 2014, might reopen the age of questions, could you elaborate more on that in the light of what has recently happened, by thinking of 24 February 2022 in the broader terms of European history?».

The main reason I was hesitant to pen a word more forceful than «perhaps» in the book is because the stakes in doing so are very high, especially given the centrality of the two world wars to the unfolding logic of the age of questions. In the case of the First World War, «querists presented universal war as both a threat and a promise, an outcome to be avoided at all costs and the only means of achieving a desired outcome. The age of questions made the Great War *thinkable*» (p. 6). In the case of the Second, the Nazi idea of the «final solution to the Jewish question» was a formulation born of the age, and the extreme violence of that «solution» emerged in the wake of a growing consensus at the end of the nineteenth century that questions were unsolvable. Furthermore, in the Nazi playbook, «the Jewish question» was not a standalone, but part of a question bundle, and «its solution was framed in a classic querists’ manner, namely, as related to and necessarily contingent on opening or reopening a series of other questions»

³¹ H. Case, *The Age of Questions: Or, A First Attempt at an Aggregate History of the Eastern, Social, Woman, American, Jewish, Polish, Bullion, Tuberculosis, and Many Other Questions over the Nineteenth Century, and Beyond*, Princeton UP, Princeton 2018, p. XV.

(p. 124). If we then conclude in light of recent events that the «age of questions» is ongoing, the implications are frankly horrifying. So in lieu of making specious extrapolations, my aim here is rather to consider as rigorously as possible how the current moment, and particularly renewed discussion of the «Ukrainian question», converges with and/or diverges from the phenomena I observed across the age of questions.

It so happened that when the query from «Passato e presente» arrived, I was preparing to work with two Brown undergraduate students – Oleksii Shebanov and Maria Gomberg Shkolnikova – on a summer research project related to my next book. Unlike myself, both are fluent in Russian, and Oleksii is also fluent in Ukrainian. Both have their own reasons for investigating the background and significance of the war in Ukraine, so I asked whether we might write the analysis collectively, to which they and the editors agreed.

We decided to focus our attention on various concrete features of the «age of questions» discussed in the book: strategic bundling of questions, scaling up to broader or universal relevance, backdating to lend a sense of urgency, and strategic formulation pointing to a particular solution. Are there recognizable convergences or divergences of form and/or content between earlier queristic interventions and current discussions on the «Ukrainian question»?

There is already a great deal of published work on the history and trajectory of the «Ukrainian question», most notably the 2003 book of the same title by Alexei Miller, which assiduously reconstructs the contours of historical debates around it. Like most historians, Miller does not always adhere to the narrow formulation of the question *as such* in his analysis. For purposes of comparability with the «age of questions» as analyzed in my book, we have limited ourselves here to considering only those instances where the «question» formulation is expressly deployed. We will also focus on relatively recent references to the «Ukrainian question», with heavy emphasis on its deployment since 2014, and especially since February 2022, with the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

We first wondered whether latter-day querists are referencing earlier debates on the «Ukrainian question». It is eminently clear that they are. The website of the Moscow School for Conflict Studies (Moskovskaya Shkola Konfliktologii), a subsection of the Russian Diplomatic Academy run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, posted a 2015 Russian translation of a text on *The Ukrainian Question* (kwestia ukraińska) dating back to 1930 and written by the Polish nationalist statesman Roman Dmowski. In line with some of Dmowski's earlier arguments, the commentaries that accompany the Russian translation of Dmowski's text argue that Poland should, in its own interest, be friendly to Russia and resist supporting «Ukrainianism in any form»,

and indeed be suspicious of the «declarations and promises made by leading Ukrainian politicians»³².

Pro-Ukrainian takes on the «Ukrainian question» have meanwhile repeated a slogan warning against making common cause with Russian liberals: «Russian democracy ends where the Ukrainian question begins». The quote has been variously attributed to Alexander Herzen, Symon Petlyura, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, and Volodymyr Vernadsky³³. Just as many earlier commentators grew suspicious of the formulation of the «Jewish question» and began seeing it as the invention of anti-Semites³⁴, so much so that «the *Encyclopedia Judaica* does not contain an entry for the «Jewish question», while *Antisemitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution* does»³⁵ – the above slogan engenders a suspicion of the very formulation of the «Ukrainian question» as a hostile Russian invention. In the words of the Ukrainian writer Oksana Zabuzhko in her book *My Longest Journey* (2022),

All that remained [for Russia] was to arrange a “crisis,” staged more or less convincingly for the world community as a “civil war in Ukraine,” and then introduce, under the international murmur of “deep concern” and relieved applause, their “peacekeeping troops” and thus “definitely solve the Ukrainian question”³⁶.

And just as the Turkish essayist and jurist, Haşim Nahid Erbil (1880-1962) sought to reframe the ubiquitous «Eastern question» as a «Western question», one recent Ukrainian commentator sought to turn the tables in a similar manner: «The “Ukrainian question”, which Russia tried to pose and solve by destroying our independence, is turning into a “Russian question” through the efforts of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Ukrainian people and our allies»³⁷.

³² *Ukrainskij vopros. Predstavlyayaem neopublikovanny donyne tekst Romana Dmovskogo, posvyashchennyi Ukraine (Stat'ya napisana v 1930 godu)*, in «Moskovskaya Shkola Konfliktologii», November 2015 (<https://conflictmanagement.ru/ukrainskiy-vopros>).

³³ For attribution of the reference to Alexander Herzen, cfr. V. Serhiichuk, *Skroplene krovii vidrodzhennia*, «Holos Ukrainy», 23 February 2019 (www.golos.com.ua/article/314094). For reference to Volodymyr Vynnychenko, cfr. A. Shekhovtsov, *Why Ukraine is wary of the Russian opposition*, «Aljazeera», 4 March 2023 (www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/3/4/why-ukraine-is-wary-of-the-russian-opposition). An online commentator attributed the quote to Symon Petlyura: cfr. *AFU Colonel: Russian Army Is Trapped*, «Chartyja' 97», 2 May 2023 (<https://charter97.org/en/news/2023/5/2/546476>); E. Pond, *The Rebirth of Europe*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington 2000, p. 68.

³⁴ H. Case, *The Age of Questions* cit., p. 119.

³⁵ Ivi, p. 118.

³⁶ O. Zabuzhko, *Moya naydovsha podorozh*, Komora, Kyiv 2022, p. 108.

³⁷ D. Redko, *Ukrainske pytannia transformuietsia v rosijske pytannia. Shcho tse znachyt' dla svitu?*, «UkrInform», 6 January 2023 (www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/3647205-ukrainske-pitanna-transformuetsa-v-rosijske-pitanna-so-ce-znacyt-dla-svitu.html).

The specter of the Second World War and the «Final Solution of the Jewish question» also weighs heavily on current discussions. One Ukrainian commentator noted that Russian propaganda’s emphasis on the need to «solve the Ukrainian question» means the wholesale destruction of Ukraine and «the Ukrainian nation as such»³⁸. In a speech delivered on March 22, 2022, just a month after the full-scale invasion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky drew an explicit parallel between Nazi and present-day Russian rhetoric:

When the Nazi party went through Europe ... [t]hey called it “the final solution to the Jewish question”. ... [L]isten to what is happening in Moscow now. Hear them utter those words again: “the final solution”, but in relation to us, to the ‘Ukrainian question.’ They said so openly. [W]ithout a war against us, they would be unable to provide a ‘final solution,’ supposedly for their own security. It’s the same thing they said eighty years ago³⁹.

The parallel has since been made by others, including the Ukrainian editor and journalist Vitalii Portnykov⁴⁰, who observed in Russian querism the tendency – common to 19th century querism – to view «the final solution to the Ukrainian question» in scientized, self-evidently single-solution terms, as «quite simple arithmetic»⁴¹.

This aversion to the «Ukrainian question» as such is by no means pervasive among Ukrainian commentators, but has become more marked since the war. Prior to 2022, it was not uncommon for Ukrainian querists to use the phrase «Ukrainian question» to discuss language politics, or more generally as a matter of independence and sovereignty⁴². And even since the full-scale invasion, some have continued to use the “question” idiom. In April 2022, for

³⁸ S. Sydorenko, *Naybil'shyi zlochyn rosiian. Chomu dovedennia henocydu v Ukraini zdatne zminyty svit*, «Evropeiska Pravda», 12 April 2022 (www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2022/04/12/7137679).

³⁹ V. Zelensky, *Promova Prezydenta Ukrainy Volodymyra Zelens'koho w Knesseti*, 22 March 2022 (www.president.gov.ua/news/promova-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-v-kneseti-73701).

⁴⁰ Noting his own Jewish background, Portnykov wrote: «Now Ukrainians are in exactly the same situation [as the Jews during WWII], although many here and in the world do not realize this, do not want to accept it, just as they did not want to realize it in the dark years of the Holocaust. We are talking about the final solution to the Ukrainian question»: V. Portnykov, *Ydetsia pro ostatochne vyrishennia ukrainskoho pytannia. Vynyshchat' usikh*, «#Bukvy». 22 March 2022 (<https://bykvu.com/ua/mysli/mova-ide-pro-ostatochne-vyrishennia-ukrainskoho-pytannia-znyshchat-usikh-do-koho-dotiahnusia>).

⁴¹ I. Tsyperdiuk, *Vitalii Portnykov: Natsiia, yaka vykhodyt' iz vyiny bez kultury, prohraie tsyvilizatsiine zmahannia*, «Interviu z Ukrainy», 29 October 2022 (<https://rozmova.word-press.com/2022/11/05/vitaliy-portnykov-65>). For the parallel with the mathematizing rhetoric of the “age of questions” cfr. H. Case, *The Age of Questions* cit., p. 120.

⁴² S. Datsiuk, *Ukrainizatsiia ta vyrishennia rosiyskoho pytannia*, «Ukrainska Pravda», 15 September 2017 (<https://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/datsuk/59bb9df1328c3>).

example, Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak wrote that «It's evident from Ukraine's resistance to Russian aggression that the Ukrainian question is close to being solved»⁴³.

When the querists of our time assert that the «Ukrainian question» is not merely a matter of narrow regional importance, but rather one of more general concern, and that the fate of Ukraine is bound to that of other global issues, they are replicating a tendency across the trajectory of the «age of questions» towards internationalization and universalization. For the «Ukrainian question», the thrust of such gestures is often expressly progressive or broadly democratic: «Cultural critics, leftists, feminists, eco-activists from all over the world who are reading this, this is not a “Ukrainian question”. This is a matter of struggle against global capitalism, patriarchy and for the preservation of the environment»⁴⁴. In Russian commentary, the tendency to «scale up» the question is manifest in the insistence that its «solution» necessarily touches upon the international balance of power⁴⁵.

A lateral effect of the events of the last decade in Ukraine has been a revival of discussion in neighboring Poland of the «Volhynia massacre question» (kwestia rzezi wołyńskiej), which references the historically troubled and often violent relationship between Poles and Ukrainians during the Second World War⁴⁶. This queristic foment has colored discussions of Ukrainian refugees in Poland and the Polish stance toward the «crisis in Ukraine» more generally. As with the re-published translation of the Dmowski text on the «Ukrainian question», the debates show an awareness of Russian attempts to mobilize the memory of Volhynia and other instances of Polish-Ukrainian antagonism in their own interest⁴⁷.

Backdating, or placing the origin of a question further back in time as a way of creating urgency towards an immediate solution, was a further

⁴³ Y. Hrytsak, *Rosijske pytannya*, «Zbruch», 2 April 2022 (<https://zbruch.eu/node/111367>).

⁴⁴ O. Kuchanskii, *Tse ne 'Ukrainske pytannia.'* *Lyst cyvilnoho tila pro aktyvizm i kulturne vyrobnytstvo pid chas viyny*, «Transversal», March 2022 (<https://transversal.at/transversal/0422/kuchanskyi/uk>).

⁴⁵ *Politolog: ukraïnskij vopros navernjaka ne ujet iz predvybornoj povestki v SShA*. «BelTA», 15 August 2023 (www.belta.by/society/view/politolog-ukraïnskij-vopros-navernjaka-ne-ujet-iz-predvybornoj-povestki-v-ssha-582655-2023) and A. Staver, *SVO kak edinstvennoe reshenie ukraïnskogo voprosa. Byli li drugie varianty uregulirovanija i chto nas zhdet v budushhem*, «Dnepropetrovsk Russkij Gorod», 29 July 2022 (https://rusdnepr.ru/svo-kak-edinstvennoe-reshenie-ukraïnskogo-voprosa-byli-li-drugie-varianty-uregulirovanija-i-chto-nas-zhdet-v-budushhem/?utm_source=yandex.ru&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=yandex.ru&utm_referrer=yandex.ru).

⁴⁶ *Upamiętnienie rzezi wołyńskiej. Polska daleko przed Ukrainą*, «Demagog», 11 July 2023 (https://demagog.org.pl/analizy_i_raporty/upamietnienie-rzezi-wołyńskiej-polska-daleko-przed-ukrainą).

⁴⁷ J. Bornio, *Kwestia Rzezi Wołyńskiej w kontekście kryzysu ukraińskiego – między rosyjską propagandą, ukraińskim poszukiwaniem tożsamości narodowej a polską racją stanu*, «Rocznik Europejski», (2016), n. 2, p. 91.

seminal feature of the «age of questions». This tendency continues to some extent, though the fact that the «Ukrainian question» already dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century means that, in lieu of back-dating, commentators often argue that there was a *particular moment* when the question *should have been «solved»*, and that the harms of the present were incurred because this earlier opportunity was missed. One Ukrainian commentator, for example, argued that 1918 should have been the birth year of an independent Ukraine, had Woodrow Wilson not consigned it to federation with Russia by refusing to include it on the list of nations worthy of self-determination⁴⁸.

Belorussian President Aleksandr Lukashenko made a structurally similar argument when addressing the council of Heads of Security Agencies and Special Services of the CIS Member States in June 2023. Mirroring narratives put forward by the Kremlin and its media services, Lukashenko said that Russia should have «solved» the «Ukrainian question» already in 2014⁴⁹. In a now infamous article by Russian propagandist Peter Akopov, written prior to the 2022 invasion and anticipating a speedy Russian victory, Akopov looked back further, to the independence of Belarus and Ukraine in 1991, as «catastrophic events» which «should have been prevented». He then framed the Russian attack on Ukraine as Putin's decision «not to leave the solution of the Ukrainian question to future generations, because the need to solve it would otherwise forever remain Russia's primary problem»⁵⁰. More ominous still is the assertion – comparable to querist arguments for more openly violent «solutions» to questions that were perceived to have resisted various attempts to solve them on the eve of WWI, the Armenian genocide, and the Second World War⁵¹ – that the war and similarly «dramatic decisions» constitute the only viable solution to the otherwise intractable «Ukrainian question»⁵².

Meanwhile, Russian querists often frame Ukrainian resistance to the 2022 invasion as itself a radical solution, maintaining that if Ukraine's leadership were serious about solving the question peacefully, they would agree to a referendum, the outcome of which would be that Eastern Ukraine would be willingly annexed to Russia. «Then and only then will the “Ukrainian question” be properly solved. If this is not done, the war will continue forever,

⁴⁸ V. Serhiichuk, *Ukrainske pytannia: Zakhid ponad sto rokiv voliv ne zlyty Rosiiu vyznanniam Ukrainy*, «Ukraina Moloda», 14 May 2022 (<https://umoloda.kyiv.ua/number/0/196/166343>).

⁴⁹ Lukashenko: *Nado bylo 'reshit' ukrainskij vopros' v 2014-15, jeto nasha edinstvennaja oshibka*, «Ukrains'ka Pravda», 2 June 2023 (www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2023/06/2/7405048).

⁵⁰ P. Akopov, *Nastuplenie Rossii i novogo mira*, «Ria.Ru», 26 February 2022 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20220226051154/https://ria.ru/20220226/rossiya-1775162336.html>).

⁵¹ H. Case, *The Age of Questions* cit., pp. 115-20.

⁵² *Pochemu Rossiya i SShA ne mogut reshit' ukrainskij vopros*, «Rambler Novosty», 4 November 2022 (<https://news.rambler.ru/conflicts/47518090-pochemu-rossiya-i-ssha-ne-mogut-reshit-ukrainskij-vopros>).

even unto the complete destruction of Ukrainian statehood and the extermination of all Ukrainians»⁵³.

Considering the foment around the «Ukrainian question», there is much to suggest that the «age of questions» is ongoing, at least on a regional scale. Furthermore, the horrific scope and brutality of the war and the tendency toward genocidal violence on the part of Russian forces in Ukraine have emerged in tandem with queristic arguments closely resembling earlier ones in the history of the age⁵⁴. Insofar as the «Final solution» had a more general delegitimizing effect on the “question” idiom in the wake of WWII, it is evident in some explicit Ukrainian commentaries and direct comparisons. There is also a deep awareness of queristic strategies on the part of some Ukrainian commentators, echoing the position of some 19th and 20th century observers who saw clearly enough that the «questions» idiom was often naught but a manipulative swindle⁵⁵.

While the tenor and diversity of many debates formally resembles those of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is one notable absence. We have not observed a bundling tendency that views the «Ukrainian question» as meaningfully connected to a nexus of other «questions». One reason may be linguistic. In the case of texts we examined that also appeared in English translation – like the Zelensky speech cited above – or which we ran through a translator, the «question» formulation often disappeared, frequently replaced by «issue» in the English translation⁵⁶. This suggests that sensibilities in English do not favor reference to «questions», which was not the case in the 19th or early 20th centuries.

This linguistic barrier – especially if it exists in other languages, as well – might be acting as a block or drag on both bundling and internationalizing tendencies. Even when we observed strategies to link the fate of Ukraine to other causes of more global concern, these were not framed as «questions». Though this absence may seem trivial, it was precisely in conjunction with such question bundling and internationalization rhetoric that earlier querists posited a necessity for global conflagration to «solve» questions. Whether this disparity is significant remains to be seen.

⁵³ A. Buharov, *Ukrainskij vopros razreshim!*, «Proza.ru», 2023 (<https://proza.ru/2023/07/30/676>).

⁵⁴ H. Case, *The Age of Questions* cit., p. 119.

⁵⁵ Ivi, pp. 153-79.

⁵⁶ Cfr. V. Zelensky, *Promova Prezydenta Ukrayiny Volodymyra Zelens'koho v Kneseti*, 22 March 2022 (www.president.gov.ua/news/promova-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimir-zelenskogo-v-kneseti-73701). The latter English translation even includes the phrase «the final solution to the Jewish issue» with reference to Nazi rhetoric, a clear anachronism; cfr. also O. Kuchanskii, *Tse ne “Ukrainske pytannia”. Lyst cyvilnoho tila pro aktyvizm i kulturne vyrobnytstvo pid chas vyny*, «Transversal» March 2022 (<https://transversal.at/transversal/0422/kuchanskyi/uk>); see L. Harding, ‘Goal is destruction of Ukraine’: ex-defence minister warns West of Putin’s aim, «The Guardian», 8 September 2023 (www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/08/goal-destruction-ukraine-ex-defence-minister-warns-west-putin-aim).